

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claim 29, without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Please amend Claim 1, as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A bone fixation system, comprising:
  - a plate having a top and bottom surface and a central axis extending longitudinally between a first end and a second end, said plate having a plurality of openings between said top and bottom surfaces,
    - wherein a pair of said openings are first and second slots positioned on opposing sides of said central axis, said first and second slots each having a width transverse to said central axis and a length extending between first and second ends of said slot in the direction of said central axis, said length being greater than said width; and
    - a drill guide having first and second guide members extending from a handle, said first and second guide members each having a passage with a first central axis extending through a center of an opening at a distal end of said corresponding guide member,
      - wherein each of said guide members includes an offset projection adjacent said distal end, said distal end and adjacent offset projection of each guide member being received together within a corresponding one of said first and second slots, said offset projection having a second central axis extending through a center of said offset portion, said second central axis being offset from said first central axis, ~~and~~
      - wherein each of said offset projections contacts said first end of said corresponding slot when said distal end and said offset projection are positioned therein, to space an adjacent edge of a hole formed through said guide member along said corresponding slot away from said first end of said slot such that a fastener inserted into the hole through said slot is spaced a distance from said first end of said slot, and

wherein, for each of said guide members, a length measured from a side of said offset projection contacting said first end of said corresponding slot to an opposite side of said distal end is less than the length of said corresponding slot.

2. (Original) The bone fixation system of claim 1, wherein each of said first and second slots defines a recess adjacent said top surface of said plate.

3. (Original) The bone fixation system of claim 2, wherein each of said guide members includes an intermediate portion configured to reside in said recess.

4. (Original) The bone fixation system of claim 1, wherein each of said guide members has a slot engaging end extending proximally from said distal end and positionable in said corresponding slot in contact with sidewalls of said slot.

5. (Original) The bone fixation system of claim 1, wherein said plate defines a groove in said top surface extending longitudinally along said central axis of said plate, said groove overlapping each of said first and second slots.

6. (Original) The bone fixation system of claim 5, wherein each of said guide members includes a notched medial sidewall oriented toward said groove when said drill guide is positioned on said plate.

7. (Original) The bone fixation system of claim 1, wherein said first and second slots are positioned over an upper vertebrae when said plate is located on the spinal column.

8. (Previously Presented) The bone fixation system of claim 1,  
wherein:  
each of said guide members includes a main body portion extending from  
said handle towards said distal end, said main body portion having an outer surface  
extending thereabout; and  
said offset projection of each of said guide members has a contact surface  
positionable against said corresponding first end of said slot, said contact surface lying in  
the same plane as and forming an extension of a portion of said outer surface of said main  
body portion.
9. (Original) The bone fixation system of claim 8, wherein each of said  
guide members has a slot engaging portion extending proximally from said distal end, an  
intermediate portion extending between said slot engaging portion and said main body  
portion, said main body portion having a first width, said intermediate portion having a  
second width less than said first width, and said slot engaging end having a third width less  
than said second width.
10. (Original) The bone fixation system of claim 9, wherein said contact  
surface extends along said slot engaging portion and said intermediate portion.
11. (Original) The bone fixation system of claim 1, wherein said  
distance is 1 millimeter or more.
- 12-26. (Canceled)
27. (Previously Presented) The bone fixation system of claim 1, wherein  
each guide member is asymmetrical.

28. (Canceled)

29. (Canceled)